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Effect of computer learning on quality of life of Iranian asthmatic patients

Mitra Zolfaghari (1)
Leila Dehghankar (2)
Younes Mohamadi (2)
Arezoo Mohamadkhani Ghiasvand (2)
Sana Eybpoosh (3)

(1) Center for Nursing Care Research, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran.

(2) Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran.

(3) Research Center for Modeling in Health, Kerman University of Medical Sciences, Kerman, Iran.

Correspondence:

Sana Eybpoosh ,
Research Center for Modeling In Health, Department
Of Epidemiology And Biostatistics,
Kerman University of Medical Sciences, Haft Bagh Avenue,
Kerman, Iran

Phone: +989126587896; Fax: 0098-341-2263725

Email: sana_eybpoosh@yahoo.com

Introduction

Asthma is the most common chronic respiratory disease and a major health problem in most regions of the world (1, 2) with a prevalence of 40% in some areas. The prevalence of asthma in Iran is 7.5% but this estimate is higher in urban areas especially metropolitan areas (3). Asthma symptoms can disturb a patients' physical activity, quality of sleep, emotional functioning, and family life (4). These issues affect patients' Quality Of Life (QOL). Asthma cannot be cured when it occurs(5), moreover it is a chronic condition; therefore, promoting QOL is of importance to asthma patients.

As noted above, symptoms and signs are mainly responsible for destroying a patients' quality of life; therefore, proper management of these problems could be considered as a solution in this regard (6). Several studies on asthma patients have reported the effect of educational intervention on symptom alleviation, anxiety control (7), QOL promotion (7, 8), and self care (9). Gaining the ability of participating in daily physical activity and reducing the number of medical encounters and hospitalization (10) are among other beneficial effects of educational interventions on asthma patients. However, little is known about the effectiveness of computer learning programs on QOL especially in asthma patients. Therefore, the aim of present study was to evaluate the effect of an educational program based on computer learning methods on QOL of asthma patients.

Materials and Methods

A quasi-experimental study was conducted. A convenience sampling method was implemented to recruit 60 asthma patients from people who were referred to the lung clinics of Tehran University of Medical Sciences' hospitals (Tehran, Iran,

Abstract

Background: Asthma is a chronic condition which affects quality of life and is a major health problem in most regions of the world. Therefore, we assessed the impact of a computer learning program on asthmatic patients' quality of life.

Methods: A quasi-experimental study was implemented. Patients with asthma were randomly assigned to intervention and control groups. The intervention of this study was a computer learning program aiming to improve asthma patients' quality of life and was delivered to the intervention group. The control group received no training. Patients' quality of life in physical, psychological, economic, and general health dimensions was assessed using

the standard SF-36 questionnaire before, and three months after, intervention.

Results: Sixty patients were recruited to the study (intervention: n=30; control: n=30). In the intervention group, quality of life was significantly improved in physical ($P=0.003$), psychological ($P=0.033$), and general health ($P=0.000$) dimensions while comparing post-test to pre-test results; but there was no improvements in the economic aspect ($P=0.202$). In the control group, no significant difference was revealed between pretest and post test results.

Conclusions: Computer learning approach can be a useful method in promoting quality of life in patients suffering from asthma.

Keywords: Computer learning, Asthma, Quality of Life